

OCR 25X1A9a

12 December 1958

THRU : Chief, Economic Research, ORR
Chief, Materials Division, ORR

Evaluation of Index of FBIS Daily Reports

1. Analysts of the Materials Division were asked on 12 November to familiarize themselves with the index of FBIS Daily Reports developed by OCR through an external services contract. The branches, in turn, have responded to a request for comments and suggestions concerning the index.

2. Individual comments on the index, as expected, run the full gamut of possible responses -- from "the index can become a valuable research tool"; to "it's an unnecessary luxury". The consensus of opinion is as follows:

A. The trial period for the index has been too short to develop a full appreciation of its potential value. Analysts rely on their files for the recovery of FBIS material and have developed individual systems of reading, clipping and filing which currently provide for them, at the expense of considerable time for intelligence maintenance, a reasonable recovery of FBIS material. It would require a minimum of at least one year of satisfactory experience with the index before analysts would "feel safe" in reducing their individual clipping and filing systems to cover only items of immediate or current interest.

B. At least a screened portion of the economic abstract cards should also be included in the index. It is recognized that many of the economic abstract cards are of marginal value, however, some procedure should be developed for including the useful cards in the index. For example, one copy of each of the cards which are routed by the ORR Reading Panel could be sent simultaneously to indexing. Recent emphasis on political events has reduced the volume of economic information which is currently published in the FBIS Daily Reports. The economic information screened from the Dailys is now disseminated through the economic abstract cards.

C. A reorganization of the index file on an other than alphabetical basis would help to make it more useful. For example, the political subdivisions and cities of a country

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should appear as subsections under that country rather than scattered throughout the file. Also, specific commodities should be subcategories under general commodity groups. The various agricultural grains should be filed under agricultural products and specific chemicals under chemical products.

D. Much of the value of this index lies in its currency. Although cards are scheduled to appear in the index not more than 3 days following the date of publication, experience to date has shown a 2-3 week lag.

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Attachments:

1 copy each, comments
from M/AG, M/CH, M/FP

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